



Together, we can solve environmental problems with communities in common-sense ways

Lead-contaminated Site Cleanup Nearing Completion

EPA this year will complete cleanup of the NL Taracorp Superfund site, which occupies almost 16 acres at 16th Street and Cleveland Boulevard in Granite City, IL.

EPA is working with Madison County Community Development to prepare a work plan on lead paint to assess risks to the community and to carry out a removal program.

Mayor John Hamm of Madison, Mayor Ronald Selph of Granite City, and Mayor Tyrone Echols of Venice fully supported cleanup of the Taracorp site. They were quoted in 1999 as saying: "We encourage the residents who have not done so to sign up to have their yards sampled and/or cleaned. This will be the last chance for residents to take advantage of the government-funded cleanup."

Background

Taracorp began business as Hoyt Metal in 1903, where it had operations related to metal processing. The company was sold and renamed United Lead, which was bought in 1928 by NL Industries. NL Industries operated the facility until 1979 when it was bought by Taracorp Inc. to make metal products. In 1997, Metallico bought out Taracorp, Inc.

In 1985, NL Industries signed a legal agreement with EPA to study and correct hazardous waste problems at and near the site. In 1986, EPA included the site on its National Priorities List (a list of sites with serious hazardous waste problems). Sites on the NPL are studied and cleaned up by EPA or companies responsible for the waste problems.

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Students take a break after performing environmental exercises in personal protective equipment.

\$20,000 Grant Awarded to Help Clean Neighborhoods

EPA's Community-Based Environmental Protection (CBEP) effort in St. Louis recently enjoyed some significant success in neighborhoods getting financial help to clean up their community environments.

A southside group of neighborhood leaders, representing more than 50 blocks and several neighborhood associations, received a \$20,000 grant from the St. Louis-Jefferson County Solid Waste District. The grant award was based on a well-conceived and well-organized proposal to reduce the amount of solid waste found in the streets and alleys of these neighborhoods.

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Problems identified

EPA studied the Taracorp site from January 1987 to November 1988, identifying several areas that contained elevated lead levels. They included:

- *NL Taracorp pile* - large disposal pile on-site where 25 to 35 drums containing lead wastes were found
- *Area 1* - property next to the site, used by the St. Louis Lead Recyclers Co., with unpaved areas and a waste pile of materials from battery cases
- *residential areas* - properties near the site where soils were contaminated with high levels of lead that could have been a health threat to the community; those closest had the highest levels of contamination
- *battery-chip fill areas* - included the Eagle Park Acres neighborhood and Venice Township alleys (battery-casing chips were used to fill some low-surface areas near driveways and alleys)

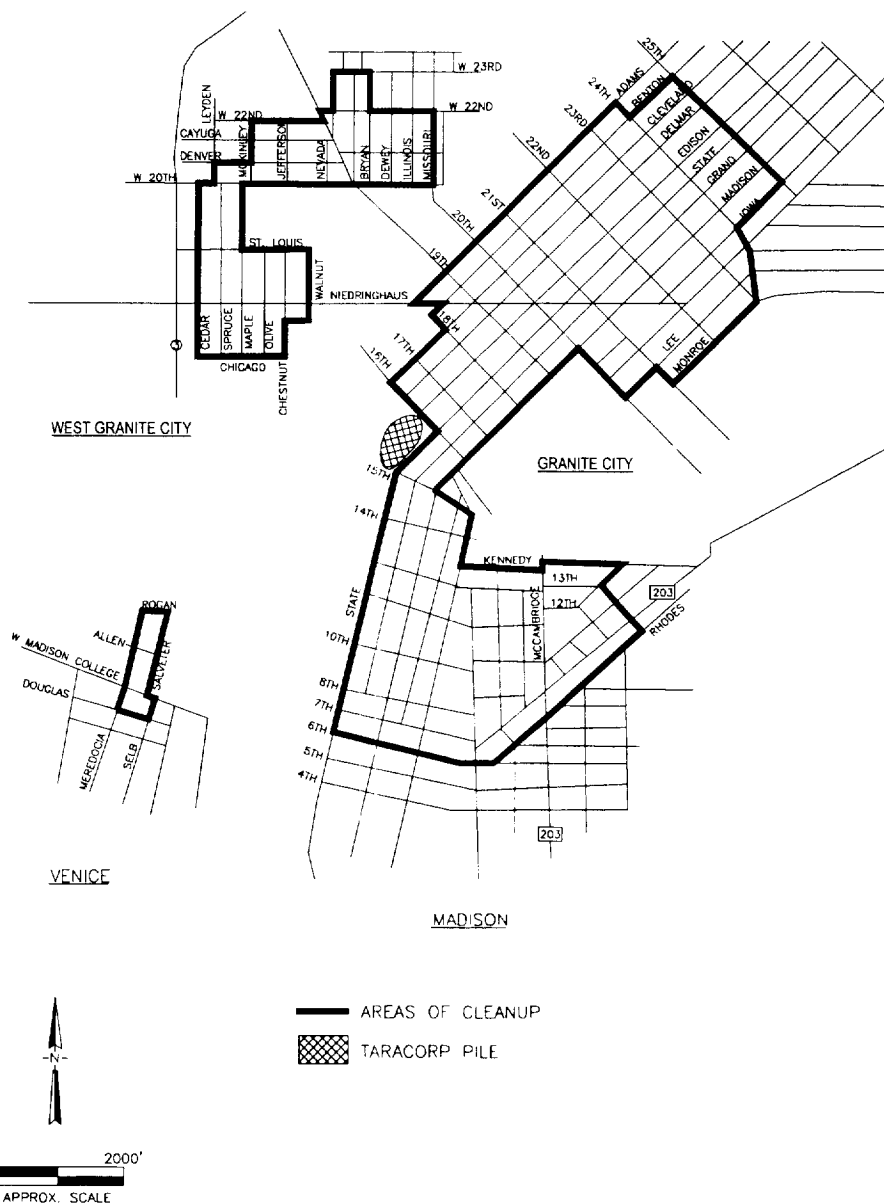
Federal oversight

Clean-up activities began in 1993. In 1998, the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) took over the activities at residential properties and the industrial property, including capping the lead pile and designing a ground-water remediation system, which will be completed in April and September, respectively. (A PRP is a company or person considered potentially responsible for the contamination at Superfund sites.)

EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers oversaw the project and all clean-up activities, which were undertaken by the PRPs in accordance with a signed legal agreement.

About 1,000 properties have been sampled at least once and are below the residential soil clean-up level of 500 parts per million for lead and 1,500 residential yards have been cleaned and restored; 87 owners denied access to their properties. About 120 remote fill properties also have been cleaned.

In partnership with the Corps of Engineers and DePaul University in Chicago, EPA carried out a Superfund Job Training Initiative from April 1997 to March 1998. Through the program, 25 community residents received specialized



URP Now Accepting Preproposal Grant Applications

Preproposal grant applications for urban natural resource projects in the Metro East community are being accepted now. The application package requires a two-page application form, typed or printed legibly, or reproduced on a word processor.

Applicants may submit proposals by E-mail to <http://www.hud.gov./local/chi/chiurp1.html>, or by postal service to:

East St. Louis Metropolitan Area
Urban Resources Partnership
100 North 8th St. Suite 224
East St. Louis, IL 62201

If a project is selected, sponsors will be notified by August 7 whether funding is available. The East St. Louis Metropolitan Area Urban Resources Partnership (URP) is expecting funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and developing a pool of qualified projects in anticipation of the award. To qualify, a project must reflect the missions and authorities of the funding agencies—USDA, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Forest Service. Project assistance generally is for two years and is expected to begin by September 1.

To be eligible, a project will address urban natural resource needs in the East St. Louis Former Metropolitan Community College District 541 (District 541) composed of the communities of Alorton, Brooklyn, Centreville, East St. Louis, Fairmount City, National City, and Washington Park. If a project is selected, the funding agencies will provide partial funding and technical assistance to its sponsor to ensure its success.

Applicant criteria

An applicant must:

- be a unit of state or local government, or a nonprofit organization with 501 c(3) status
- be within the boundaries of District 541

Project criteria

The project must:

- have an "on the ground" component that will make a positive change in the community's natural resource conservation or urban forest resources
- have an educational component to further community awareness, understanding, and abilities to address natural resource conservation or urban forest resource issues

- be community based/focused/driven to enhance community capacity
- address natural resource conservation or urban forest resource issues
- help an underserved population or area to improve community access to resources
- affect one or more of the seven communities of District 541
- show significant partnerships between residents, interests, and organizations of the community and similar entities from an adjoining community

Organizations that get a grant must:

- report quarterly and annually on project expenditures
- document expenditures in detail
- document activities and progress with narration and photographs
- recognize URP in signage and publicity releases
- provide at least a 50 percent match with local funding or in-kind materials and/or services

More information is available from Roscoe Allen, Urban Resources Partnership in East St. Louis, 618-271-9540.



Kathy Haywood and Richard Suttle Sr., Emerson Park Development Corporation, proudly exhibit their URP greening project in East St. Louis.

North Riverfront Trail: A Road to the Past

For people working on environmental issues and problems, the word "urban" usually creates many negative images:

- heat islands in the summer
- air inversions with choking blankets of smog
- the whine of traffic as it careens, bumper to bumper
- expressways slashing through neighborhoods, separating cultures to connect businesses and creating exits for center-city flight
- microscopic particles of rubber peeled from whirling tires
- decaying infrastructure, deteriorating houses, and abandoned buildings

This is not a pretty picture, but it is realistic and typical of metropolitan areas across the country. Most of these cities were born on the banks of rivers and bays. Before pavement, our expressways were waterways.

St. Louis is no different. If you leave the concrete arteries and go west of Interstate 70, you come to the source of the city's conception and birth—the Mississippi River. In many stretches, it's not easy to reach. In some places you have to find a breach in a levee to reach where muddy water and eroding earth connect. If you get to that point, you probably crossed a narrow paved trail that begins at the Arch and runs north more than 10 miles to the Chain-of-Rocks Bridge. This trail—the North Riverfront Trail—in distance is not far from the urban problems mentioned above. But psychologically it transports you a great distance in time and spirit.

Looking west, you can see many of the inner-workings of a typical big city—rail lines, junk yards, warehouses, power plants. But looking east, all along the trail, you can find a tremendous variety of land forms, vegetation, wildlife. In some areas the trail is practically at water's edge. In other places it passes through thickly

wooded areas choked with a tangle of vines and undergrowth, providing habitat for rabbits, squirrels, opossums, and raccoons.

Near the newly constructed rest shelter, the trail looks out on a broad flood plain with a view that extends to large islands of sand and towering cottonwoods in mid-channel. It takes little imagination to feel what early explorers must have felt when they first beheld this bridgeless barrier. It's hard to believe that the soaring Arch and the teeming city are only a few miles away. It seems much farther.

Collaboration of partners

Many partners collaborated to make this trail a reality: various departments of the city, businesses who own property abutting the trail, TrailNet, and a special group of people at Grace Hill Neighborhood Services Corporation. They mobilized resources from Americorps, the Missouri Department of Economic Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

They reached into local neighborhoods and recruited teenagers to become trail rangers. Now they are attempt-

ing to raise additional funds to build a native plant nursery to reintroduce native species along the trail. It is also intended as a neighborhood economic development opportunity.

By its nature, this is a project that you do not do just once. Like any growing thing, it demands constant attention and nurturing. But Grace Hill is in for the long pull. The next time you need a respite from the built environment, visit the North Riverfront Trail. It does not disappoint.

For more information, contact Richard Sumpter, EPA Region 7, 913-551-7661, or E-mail, sumpter.richard@epa.gov.

Chain of Rocks Bridge

Compiled From News Reports

The Missouri Conservation Department and the Department of Natural Resources have pledged \$1.4 million each toward the \$14 million - \$18 million needed to build a visitors and interpretive center near the junction of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The Department of Transportation and Tourism are among the backers, but they have not committed the money.

The center, situated near the intersection of Riverview Drive and Interstate 270 on the northern edge of the St. Louis, would direct visitors to attractions such as the Old Chain of Rocks pedestrian bridge the Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, the Katy Trail, and the Confluence Greenway.

The project needs pledges of funding by June to be able to open in 2004, the time of the national observance of the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark's exploration of the Louisiana Purchase.

One building site under consideration is a wooded bluff near the former Chain of Rocks amusement park. Center exhibits would direct visitors to nearby attractions, including the renovated Old Chain of Rocks pedestrian bridge.

Of the money pledged, \$80,000 has been spent on a contract with an architectural firm for site evaluation and preliminary drawings, and to hire Ann Mack, formerly head of a nonprofit agency conservation group, as project director. Mack is an employee of Trailnet, Inc., the group that leased and renovated the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge.

NTAC Gives Nonprofit Groups Tools for Success in East St. Louis

Community revitalization starts with an idea— *a vision*— and a motivation among residents to improve where they live.

The East St. Louis Enterprise Community (EC) knows that locally driven community-improvement projects work, and local groups empowered with community-development tools can make big things happen. That is why the EC supports efforts of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center (NTAC). Since the establishment of NTAC in August 1996, more than 60 organizations have received community-development assistance, ranging from nonprofit management to computer access and fund-raising to organizational strategic planning and grant writing.

The success of NTAC is largely seen in relationships between local organizations engaged in community revitalization, which have created a movement of grassroots community development and a network of resources and opportunities. The increased capacity of local organizations, and the partnerships between them, has also created a more-informed community better able to work with municipal agencies and outside resources as partners. In return, municipal agencies and other organizations are looking to grassroot groups for guidance and information to come together for revitalization of the Enterprise Community.

The East St. Louis-based office combines local initiative with university resources to revitalize the community. NTAC's approach is one of training, capacity building, and relationship building. Program Director Cathy Klump said, "A major key to the success of NTAC is the relationships that are built between nonprofit organizations, funders, and the municipalities. It is magic!"

NTAC has used EC resources to work with local groups on improving open space, rehabilitating and constructing affordable housing, providing enhanced community and social services, lobbying local government for improvements, and building the membership of grass-root organizations. NTAC is where EC residents and organizations interested in nonprofit community development can request one-stop technical assistance, training, and volunteer assistance. It has an "open-door" policy where any nonprofit entity can get technical assistance to promote community-development projects.

For more information, call Cathy Klump, NTAC, 618-217-9605. The web site is: <http://www.imlab.uiuc.edu/eslarp/ntac/>.

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Specifically, the Southeast St. Louis Neighborhoods Waste Reduction Project identified 13 measurable objectives involving waste-reduction measures. Included in these objectives were 25 tons of waste reduction (½ ton for every one of 50 targeted blocks); 10 new "Stop it-Don't Drop It" trash bins; 3 trash forums; 200 "Rules of the Alley" signs; 725 multilingual stickers on dumpsters; 2 community gardens; recycling bins; and monthly voluntary trash pick-up efforts. The proposal and its objectives are even more interesting because this particular neighborhood group of leaders did not exist eight months ago.

The proposal is the result of a collaborative effort among EPA, the St. Louis Community College, Vector Communications (a public engagement firm), and CORO Midwestern Center, a nationally recognized neighborhood leadership-training organization. More important, it is a direct result of the Listening Tour conducted by EPA in the fall of 1997. EPA solicited comments from St. Louis residents about their concerns for the environment and identified a "top 10" list of environmental issues. After that, two neighborhood groups, one from the southside, the other from the northside, were selected to receive intensive training provided by CORO on leadership techniques, project management, asset mapping, collaboration concepts, grant writing, and understanding and using the local political system to help resolve the issues.

Both neighborhood groups selected one of the "top 10" issues identified in the Listening Tour and used the training to devise a plan to address—and perhaps even eliminate—that particular problem for their neighborhoods.

While success came first to the southside group in the form of a grant, it will find the northside group. Both groups are seeking measurable environmental results.

Moreover, the Listening Tour spawned other significant CBEP collaborative efforts, including an Abandoned Building project, the Air Screening Project, and Project Team Sweep.

For more information, get in touch with Phillip S. Page, EPA Region 7, 913-551-7580, or E-mail, page.phil@epa.gov.

More information

If you have questions about material in this newsletter, or if you need more information about the Gateway Initiative, you may get in touch with the following persons:

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